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REPRESENTATIVE PICTURE

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INDIA TO RESTRICT ENTRY-LEVEL CHINESE SMARTPHONES: REPORT

Chinese makers could be barred from selling phones cheaper than ₹12,000 in the Indian market, according to Bloomberg

MOVE TO HELP DOMESTIC BRANDS

The proposed move is aimed at helping homegrown brands such as Lava and MicroMax and pushing Chinese giants out of the lower segment of the world's second-biggest mobile market, the news agency reported. The development comes amid India's tough stand against Chinese manufacturers and recent raids on OPPO, Vivo and Xiaomi

BODY BLOW TO XIAOMI, OTHERS

- Exclusion from India's entry-level market would hurt brands like Xiaomi that rely heavily on India to drive growth
- Industry estimates say smartphones under ₹12,000 contributed to a third of India's sales volume for the quarter through June, with Chinese brands accounting for 80% of those shipments

50%

ESTIMATED SHARE OF XIAOMI AND REALME IN THE SUB ₹12K SEGMENT

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Anti-Big Bang theory scientists face censorship by int'l journals

BALA CHAUHAN @ Bengaluru

SCIENTISTS from across the globe, including India, who are refuting the Big Bang theory on cosmology are facing resistance and censorship from journals and archives of international repute where they get their research papers published for peer review.

The Big Bang theory holds that the universe was born out of a highly compressed, dense and microscopic point (called singularity), which exploded with a huge force some 13.8 billion years ago, resulting in everything arising from that singularity moving outwards in all directions. From this, all cosmic matter (as we know it today) was formed at different stages through time until now.

Twenty-four astronomers and physicists from 10 countries including reputed astrophysicist Jayant V Narlikar of Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics, Prof Sisir Roy of National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) and Prof Amitabha Ghosh of Indian National Science Academy (INSA) from India are among the scientists protesting the censorship of papers critical of the Big Bang hypothesis, by the open preprint website arXiv.

Jayant V Narlikar

"As scientists engaged in the study of the cosmos and the relation of phenomena in space to those on Earth, we strongly protest arXiv's censorship of controversial papers on cosmology and specifically on the Big Bang hypothesis. Run by Cornell University, arXiv is supposed to provide an open public forum for researchers to exchange pre-publication papers, without undertaking to peer-review them. But during June 2022, arXiv rejected three papers which are critical of the validity of the Big Bang hypothesis. No specific reason was given," the scientists wrote.

Arindam Mal of the ISRO Ahmedabad and Sarbani Palit of the Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata also faced difficulty in having their research paper *Redshift Periodicity and its Significance for Recent Observation*, which counters the Big Bang hypothesis — published in peer-reviewed journals like Astronomy and Astrophysics Journal, and Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society. CONTINUED ON: P5

WHAT'S THE BIG BANG THEORY?

According to a NASA explainer, the Big Bang theory indicates how the universe began — as just a single point, then expanded and stretched to grow as large as it is right now. It is still believed to be stretching

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Govt records show 28k more Covid deaths

SHILPA P @ Bengaluru

AS many as 28,000 more Covid deaths have been reported in the state by the Directorate of Social Security and Pensions (DSSP) of the Revenue Department. This is in addition to the 40,121 deaths mentioned in the daily media bulletin issued by the Health Department.

Admitting that there is a difference of at least 28,000 deaths, health department officials attributed the disparity to the expansion of the definition of deaths due to Covid.

So far, the state government, through DSSP, has cleared the compensation of ₹267.99 crore to the families of 53,586 people who died due to Covid so far. As per these figures alone, the health department has missed 13,465 Covid deaths.

In fact, DSSP has received applications from 60,444 families, while the claims of 2,894 are still under process. The DSSP, under the State Disaster Relief Funds, has released Rs 50,000 each to the family of the deceased as per the guidelines of the National Disaster Management Authority.

Health department sources said the difference in the number of deaths in the media bulletin and DSSP list is only because of the expansion of the definition of Covid deaths. "Earlier, deaths of Covid-affected people only at hospitals were recorded by the health department. But now, deaths even at homes or elsewhere are considered as Covid deaths followed by clinical correlation. The kin of the people whose names are missing from the health department list can approach the grievance committee to get the compensation," an official said.

Health Commissioner D Randeep said, "We are waiting for the government's guidelines and approval to include the additional Covid deaths (recorded by DSSP) in the media bulletin."

Electricity (Amend) bill introduced in LS, sent to panel amid Oppn's rage

RAKESH KUMAR @New Delhi

THE controversial Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2022, which is expected to escalate Centre-state confrontation, was introduced in the Lok Sabha on Monday and later sent to the Standing Committee on Energy for vetting.

The bill mandates state electricity regulatory commissions (SERCs) to specify regulations to progressively reduce cross-subsidy, which is subsidising one set of customers at the cost of others. It requires SERCs to adhere to the National Electricity Tariff Policy while determining cross-subsidy.

Subsidies will not be accounted for while fixing tariff; subsidies will be provided directly to consumers.

The bill allows multiple distribution licences within the same area of supply. No applicant who fulfils all the conditions can be refused a licence. It also provides for graded revision in tariff over a year besides mandatory fixing of maximum and minimum tariff by the appropriate commission.

Introducing the Bill, Union power minister R K Singh called it "pro-people and for the growth of our economy" that would allow consumers to choose from multiple electricity distributors. But experts feel otherwise.

According to the All India Power Engineers Federation (AIPEF), it would intrude into the powers and functions of the state governments, abolish subsidies and cross-subsidies and harm farmers and consumers alike. "It seeks to centralise almost all functions of the DISCOMS as well as SERCs, thereby changing the entire character of the electricity supply industry and existing legislation as well as the federal structure," said Shailendra Dubey, chairman of AIPEF. He also said the area of licence has not been clearly defined. "This would lead to cherry-picking and eventually in privatising profits and nationalising losses."

Former Power Secretary Subash Chandra Garg told this newspaper the sector can be reformed only when state distribution utilities are dismantled, private entities take over business like in Delhi and states support farmers and other vulnerable sections by providing direct benefit transfers. "Unfortunately, this bill has none of these provisions."

Privatisation of profit?

It envisages allowing multiple private companies to provide electricity in the same area, a provision that could lead to privatisation of profits and nationalisation of losses
- Manish Tewari, Cong

It's contrary to the assurances given by the govt to the SKM during their protest. It had at that point agreed to shelve amendments to the Electricity Act
Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, Cong

The proposed amendments are dangerous... They will only benefit a few power distribution companies
Arvind Kejriwal, Delhi CM

Electricity is on the concurrent list. It is the bounden duty of the Centre to have effective consultations with state governments before introducing the bill
- N K Premachandran, RSP

Farmers will continue to get free power. There will be no rollback of subsidy
- R K Singh, power minister

Monsoon session ends four days ahead of schedule

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @New Delhi

MONSOON session of Parliament ended four days ahead of schedule on Monday as both Houses were adjourned sine die. According to the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, the session was supposed end on August 12 but was curtailed due to completion of essential government business and in view of two public holidays ahead -- Muharram on August 9 and Raksha Bandhan on August 11. However, the Opposition accused the government of running away from discussing bills and other important issues.

The session witnessed repeated disruptions with the Opposition members aggressively raising the issues of inflation and the ED action, while the BJP vociferously protested Congress MP Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury's Rashtrapatni remark. A record number of Opposition 27 MPs were suspended — 23 from Rajya Sabha and 4 from Lok Sabha — for unruly behaviour.

The government had set a target of passing 32 Bills, including 24 new ones, but the Lok Sabha could pass only seven and the Rajya Sabha five. The Lok Sabha functioned for 48% of the scheduled time while the Rajya Sabha functioned for 44% of the time.

Attacking the government for curtailing the session, Trinamool Congress Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien tweeted, "This is the seventh consecutive time (since Budget Session 2020) Parliament session has been cut short. Stop mocking Parliament. We will fight for its sanctity..."

Congress Rajya Sabha MP Jairam Ramesh said, "Early adjournment is at the government's request. We were prepared to discuss Bills."

The monsoon session is supposed to be the last one to be held in the old building as the government plans to hold the winter session in the new building expected to be completed before the next session.

NITISH SET TO BOLT, LEAD NEW GOVT WITH RJD, LEFT?

SHAHID FARIDI @New Delhi

BIHAR is all set to have a Maharashtra's Maha Vikas Aghadi-type coalition government comprising all non-NDA parties, as Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United) indicated it may snap its ties with the BJP.

Sources said Nitish has already spoken to interim Congress president Sonia Gandhi and the leaders of the three Left parties — CPI(ML), CPI(M), and CPI, besides Lalu Yadav and Tejashwi Yadav, leaders of the main opposition party RJD.

All opposition parties have agreed to support Nitish as the chief minister. According to sources, all supporting parties are likely to join the new government, which will be sworn in within this week.

All the non-NDA parties have called their MLAs to Patna where a formal approval for supporting a new government would be sought from them. Congress general secretary in-charge of Bihar Bhakt Charan Das has flown into the state capital to iron things out.

A formal announcement of breaking alliance with the BJP is likely to be made by the JD(U) after the meeting of its MPs and MLAs in Patna on Tuesday.

Politics in Bihar took a critical turn on Sunday with JD(U) president Rajiv Ranjan Singh attacking his party's ally BJP without naming it. Singh said attempts were made in the past to get JD(U) candidates defeated in Assembly elections. He said a 'Chirag Model' was used in Bihar by getting Ramvilas Paswan's son Chirag Paswan to field candidates against the JD(U) to reduce the number of JD(U) MLAs in the state legislature. There were reports that Chirag was supported by the BJP in the last election.

Singh did not elaborate, but hinted that former JD(U) president R C P Singh was at the centre of a conspiracy to split the party. The JD(U) issued a show-cause notice to R C P Singh following which he resigned from the party's membership.

Speaking to reporters at Patna, JD(U) spokesperson K C Tyagi said, "Nitish Kumar is the undisputed leader of the JD(U). He commands respect in the rank and file. Whatever decision is taken by the party under his leadership will be accepted by everyone."

The RJD, too, has called a meeting of its lawmakers on Tuesday. RJD national vice-president Shivanand Tiwary said both parties convening meetings of legislators was a clear indication that the situation was extraordinary. "We cannot ignore the fact that both parties, which together had sufficient numbers for a majority, have convened such meetings when an Assembly session is not round the corner," Tiwary said. P9

Full Cong support

The Bihar Congress on Monday extended unconditional support to Nitish if he were to come to the opposition camp. The decision was taken at a meeting of party MLAs and MLCs in Patna

BIRMINGHAM 2022

BAG OF GOLD

It was a day of domination from the paddlers and shuttlers as India collected a handful of gold, finishing fourth in the medals tally

GOLDEN AGE FOR SHARATH

He may be 40 years old, but Sharath Kamal is still relentless in his pursuit of excellence. He finds that extra motivation for age-defying feats and this time at the Commonwealth Games he has medalled in each event he entered — teams gold, men's doubles silver, mixed-doubles gold crowned them with singles gold. This was his seventh gold; he won India's first-ever table tennis gold in 2006

SILVER IN HOCKEY & CRICKET

Both the hockey men's team and the women's cricket team lost to Australia in their respective gold medal matches, finishing with silver. While the Indian women lost late on Sunday night by nine runs, in hockey, the men were hammered 0-7 by the Australians on Monday

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CLEAN SWEEP IN BADMINTON

PV Sindhu and young gun Lakshya Sen lived up to expectations by grabbing gold medals as India swept the singles badminton competition at the Commonwealth Games for the first time. Later in the day, Satwiksairaj Ranki Reddy and Chirag Shetty won gold in men's doubles event

JAB-O-METER — TAKE YOUR SHOT

August 7: 34,75,330 doses
August 8: 26,69,118 doses
TOTAL: 2,06,84,91,043

NATIONWIDE	AUG 7	AUG 8	KARNATAKA	AUG 7	AUG 8
Fresh cases	18,738	16,167	Fresh cases	1,837	1,019
Recoveries	18,558	15,549	Recoveries	1,290	1,662
Deaths	40	41	Deaths	4	3

DEEP SEA MYSTERY

Groper fish all across Karwar beach spark debate

SUBHASH CHANDRA N S @ Karwar

GROPER fish, which have a good commercial value, are found strewn all across Rabindranath Tagore beach in Karwar, triggering a debate between fishermen and experts over the cause behind it. While some say it is due to global warming, marine biology experts disagree.

The fishermen are not venturing into the sea after an alert issued by the met department. It has been more than two months since they cast their nets. The sea is very rough with huge waves hitting the shore. "Groper fish swim in deep water. They have come ashore because the water deep down is getting colder," said Prakash Banalikar, a local fisherman.

Fishermen collect Groper fish at Karwar's Rabindranath Tagore beach. (inset) Groper fish washed ashore | EXPRESS

Vinayaka Harikantra, another fisherman, echoed Prakash's view by saying that the sea water is very cold these days. "We are seeing Groper fish on the beach for the first time. It is due to cold water. We can feel the cold water when we enter the sea at its shallow end," he said.

Many were happy after the fish were found on the shore. "The sea has become a mirage for us these days. We are so glad that we are able to catch these fish on the shore," says Prakash.

Shivakumar Haragi, Assistant Professor, Department of Marine Biology, Karnataka University, Dharwad says Groper fish are coming ashore due to upwelling process, which happens during monsoon. P5

EXPRESS READ

Zameer, Ashoka spar over Idgah Maidan

Bengaluru: Congress MLA Zameer Ahmed and Revenue Minister R Ashoka have locked horns over the Idgah Maidan issue. While Zameer said Ganesha festival will not be allowed on the grounds, Ashoka said the government might consider allowing it | P4

Paper verification by KEA subject to HC orders

Bengaluru: While hearing a batch of petitions filed by Common Entrance Test repeaters, the Karnataka High Court on Monday made it clear that the Karnataka Examination Authority's document verification process will be subject to its orders | P2

Panic as hoax bomb threat on Indigo flight delays landing

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

PANIC prevailed on board an Indigo flight carrying 175 passengers from Jaipur to Bengaluru on Sunday night just before it was scheduled to land at Kempegowda International Airport (KIA). An anonymous message saying a bomb was planted on the flight was found scrawled on a tissue paper in one of the toilets. The Flight Captain contacted the security agencies at KIA and landed the flight only after receiving clearance. The threat turned out to be a hoax.

Flight No. 6E 546 had taken off from Jaipur airport at 6.46 pm, 11 minutes behind its scheduled time and landed at 9.26 pm. The passengers were allowed to leave KIA only around 2 am on Monday.

A security official said a message written in Hindi was found by a cabin crew member on a tissue paper inside the rear toilet. It read: '*Land na karna, is flight me bomb hai*' (Do not land, there is a bomb in the flight).

The airline staffer who spotted it alerted the cockpit crew who then contacted the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and the Air Traffic Control (ATC) unit. P2